

NEWARK
PUBLIC
INFORMATION
OFFICE



City Hall, 920 Broad Street, Room 214
Newark, New Jersey 07102
(201) 733-8004
Sharpe James, Mayor
Pamela E. Goldstein, Director

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FOR RELEASE AFTER 2 p.m.
PLEASE CONTACT: Pamela E. Goldstein (973) 733-6368
E.J. Miranda (973) 733-7338

PARK NAMED FOR HIT AND RUN VICTIM

The memory of a little boy, who was mowed down by a hit and run driver as he dribbled a basketball across the street from his home, will live on in a new park dedicated today on Johnson Avenue in Newark's South Ward.

The mother, family, schoolmates, teachers and neighbors of Terrell James, who was killed last March by an out-of-town driver, joined Mayor Sharpe James, Schools Superintendent Dr. Beverly L. Hall and city officials today to name the .5 acre park between Clinton Avenue and West Alpine Street in memory of the youngster.

"There is no greater tribute to the vibrancy, warmth and spirit of Terrell James, who was taken from us much too soon, than to name this park in his honor," declared the Mayor. "Here we have a beautiful park where neighborhood children can play safely with amenities that will appeal to both teenagers and adults. What an appropriate tribute to Terrell!"

The park will replace the existing green space between the Clinton Avenue entrance and exit ramps of Interstate 78 and is funded by a \$300,000 appropriation from the New Jersey Department of Transportation. The site was donated by the Newark Public Schools.

According to City Engineer Howard Lazarus, the closure of the existing park includes removing the baseball backstop and basketball courts and relandscaping the area to interstate highway ramp specifications. The new park consists of a play area with a padded surface, basketball court, sitting areas, fencing and landscaping. The play area includes swings, slides and a tot lot.

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TERRELL JAMES PARK AD 1

“The untimely death of Terrell James struck deeply at the heart of our community,” said Newark School Superintendent Dr. Beverly L. Hall. “In the wake of that tragedy, the school district and the City joined together to make a safe haven for the children of Belmont-Runyon and the neighboring community. As we move forward with our plans to construct a new Belmont-Runyon school, we believe that this playground, which will soon be filled with the laughter and joy of our children, is a fitting tribute to the memory of Terrell.”

“This Johnson Avenue site, with less congestion and through traffic rushing to enter and exit Newark from Route 78, is a much safer location,” according to James. “Along with the development of the adjacent, planned Shabazz Athletic Complex this community will have beautiful, new state-of-the-art recreational offerings that will enhance the ongoing revitalization of the Lower Clinton Hill area of the South Ward,” he said.

In keeping with the revitalization of the Belmont Runyon/Shabazz neighborhood, the Mayor pointed out that the City’s Department of Engineering, in conjunction with the DOT, has installed new signage to increase the safety of children attending the Belmont-Runyon School adjacent to the I-78 ramp, where Terrell was a student. These new precautions include signs prohibiting left turns from the off ramp onto West Runyon Street, school zone flashing lights and erecting signage to change the main approach to the interstate from Irvine Turner Boulevard, which runs by the grammar school, to Elizabeth Avenue.

The City also has restriped the crosswalk by the school to make it more visible to motorists and designated a truck route to West Peddie Street, thereby keeping trucks from the street in front of the school.

James also offered that his administration, through its Congressional delegation, has applied for funding from the Intermodal Service Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) to reconfigure the existing Route 78 entrance and exit ramp from West Runyon Street to Elizabeth Avenue.

Others who spoke at the park dedication were Terrell’s mother, Renee James, his school principal, James Suite and City Council President and South Ward Councilman Donald Bradley.